UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA PHILADELPHIA DIVISION

THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC., a New Jersey Non Profit Corporation,

Plaintiff,

117	•
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Case No.:

PARAMOUNT PROPERTIES 151 LEWIS, LLC, a Limited Liability Company,

Defendant.	
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COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC., a New Jersey Non-Profit Corporation, on its behalf and on behalf of all other mobility-impaired individuals similarly-situated, (sometimes referred to as "Plaintiff"), hereby sues the Defendant, PARAMOUNT PROPERTIES 151 LEWIS, LLC, a Pennsylvania Limited Liability Company, (herein sometimes referred to as "Defendant"), for Injunctive Relief, and attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC § 12181 et seq. ("ADA").

- 1. Plaintiff, THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC., is a non-profit corporation formed under the laws of the State of New Jersey and maintains its principal office at 1002 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974-1030, in the County of Union.
- Defendant's property, Tacony Creek Plaza, is located at 5696 Rising Sun Avenue,
 Philadelphia, PA 19120 in the County of Philadelphia.

- 3. Venue is properly located in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania because venue lies in the judicial district of the property situs. The Defendant's property is located in and does business within this judicial district.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 USC § 1331 and 28 USC § 1343, this Court has been given original jurisdiction over actions which arise from the Defendant's violations of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC § 12181 et seq. See, also, 28 USC § 2201 and § 2202.
- Plaintiff, THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC., is a non-profit New Jersey corporation. Members of this organization include individuals with disabilities as defined by the ADA, and are representative of a cross-section of the disabilities to be protected from discrimination by the ADA. The purpose of this organization is to represent the interest of its members by assuring places of public accommodation are accessible to and usable by the disabled and that its members are not discriminated against because of their disabilities. THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC. and its members have suffered and will continue to suffer direct and indirect injury as a result of the Defendant's discrimination until the Defendant is compelled to comply with the requirements of the ADA. One or more of its members has suffered an injury that would allow it to bring suit in its own right. THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC. has been discriminated against because of its association with its disabled members and their claims.
- 6. DENNIS MAURER is a New Jersey resident, and qualifies as an individual with disabilities as defined by the ADA. Mr. Maurer has multiple sclerosis and is mobility

- impaired, and uses a wheelchair for mobility. Mr. Maurer is a member of the Plaintiff organization, THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC., discussed above in paragraph 5.
- Mr. Maurer has been to the subject property numerous times. The barriers to access as set forth herein have endangered his safety. He plans to return to the subject property in the near future. Mr. Maurer has been a resident of South Jersey his entire life, and regularly travels to Philadelphia to see friends, to eat, to shop and to go to shows, concerts and sporting events, and to go to Parx Casino and Race Track. In conjunction with his activities in Philadelphia, he enjoys looking for the best Philly cheesesteaks. Mr. Maurer is an avid horseman, and is a retired former thoroughbred trainer in the state of New Jersey. He trained horses at Philadelphia Park in the 80's and 90's.
- 8. Defendant owns, leases, leases to, or operates a place of public accommodation as defined by the ADA and the regulations implementing the ADA, 28 CFR 36.201(a) and 36.104. Defendant is responsible for complying with the obligations of the ADA. The place of public accommodation that the Defendant owns, operates, leases or leases to is known as Tacony Creek Plaza, and is located at 5696 Rising Sun Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19120.
- 9. THE INDEPENDENCE PROJECT, INC. and DENNIS MAURER have a realistic, credible, existing and continuing threat of discrimination from the Defendant's non-compliance with the ADA with respect to the property as described but not necessarily limited to the allegations in paragraph 11 of this Complaint. Plaintiff has reasonable grounds to believe that they will continue to be subjected to discrimination in violation of the ADA by the Defendant. DENNIS MAURER desires to visit Tacony Creek Plaza not

- only to avail himself of the goods and services available at the property but to assure himself that the property is in compliance with the ADA so that he and others similarly-situated will have full and equal enjoyment of the property without fear of discrimination.
- 10. The Defendant has discriminated against the individual Plaintiff and members of the corporate Plaintiff organization by denying them access to, and full and equal enjoyment of, the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the buildings, as prohibited by 42 USC § 12182 et seq.
- 11. The Defendant has discriminated, and is continuing to discriminate, against the Plaintiff in violation of the ADA by failing to, inter alia, have accessible facilities by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if Defendants have 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). A preliminary inspection of the Tacony Creek Plaza has shown that violations exist. These violations which DENNIS MAURER personally encountered or observed, include, but are not limited to:

Parking and Exterior Accessible Route

- a) Tacony Creek Plaza provides accessible parking that lacks identification signage, contains spaces which lack adequate access aisles, contains slopes greater than 2.0% and fails to provide an accessible route from parking, violating Sections 402 and 502 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. These conditions during numerous visits caused Mr. Maurer to Double Park to ensure he could exit/enter his van and prevented Mr. Maurer from unloading from his van freely and safely.
- b) Curb ramps provided to access stores at Tacony Creek Plaza are unsafe for wheelchair users and are not provided in some areas of the center. The curb ramps contain excessive slopes, abrupt changes of level and lack level landings, violating Sections 402 and 406 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Curb ramps with excessive slopes are a hazard to Mr. Maurer and put him in danger of tipping over.
- c) Tacony Creek Plaza fails to provide the required amount of compliant accessible parking spaces, violating Section 502 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. The lack of accessible parking makes Mr. Maurer park in open areas so he can unload freely and safely from his vehicle.

- d) The exterior accessible route from parking spaces at Tacony Creek Plaza contains severe abrupt changes of level greater than ¼ inch and lacks a direct route to ramps or curb ramps, violating Section 402 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Mr. Maurer was forced to travel in the traffic area of the center while avoiding abrupt changes of level to get to the curb ramp.
- e) Tacony Creek Plaza fails to provide a safe accessible route to the adjacent bus stop, street or sidewalk, violating Section 206.2.1 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. The lack of an accessible route prevents the option of public transportation for Mr. Maurer.

Access to Goods and Services

- f) Tacony Creek Plaza including fail to provide lowered counters and certain elements are mounted beyond the reach of Mr. Maurer, violating Sections 308 and 904 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Mr. Maurer required assistance while checking out at 607-631S Chester Rd Shopping Center.
- g) Entering tenants is impeded by abrupt changes of level at the base and/or slopes beyond limits, violating Section 404 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Abrupt changes of level can cause damage to Mr. Maurer's wheelchair.
- h) America's Best Wings fails to provide accessible dining tables for those in wheelchairs, violating Section 902 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Mr. Maurer was unable to dine comfortably due to a lack of accessible tables.

Restrooms

- i) Restrooms at America's Best Wings and Forman Mills were reported to be unsafe for use by the plaintiff. Inspection revealed Mr. Maurer was unable to use the restrooms safely due to a lack of accessibility. Including, inaccessible water closets which lack proper controls and wheelchair maneuvering space violating Section 601 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards.
- j) Restrooms at America's Best Wings and Forman Mills provide dispensers beyond reach of Mr. Maurer and are inaccessible to the plaintiff, violating Section 308 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards.
- k) Lavatories at America's Best Wings and Forman Mills lack knee clearance and accessibility preventing Mr. Maurer from freely accessing the lavatory, violating Section 606 the 2010 Accessibility Standards.
- America's Best Wings and Forman Mills provide restrooms that contain improper centerlines for the water closets and flush controls mounted on the wall side, violating Section 604 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Mr. Maurer was unable to access flush controls while in the restrooms due to improper location.

m) Using restrooms doors America's Best Wings and Forman Mills are impeded by round door knobs, improper signage and/or a lack of maneuvering clearance, violating Section 404 of the 2010 Accessibility Standards. Lack of latch side clearance, stored goods and maneuvering space impede Mr. Maurer from easily accessing doors.

Maintenance

- n) The accessible features of the facility are not maintained, creating barriers to access for the Plaintiff, as set forth herein, in violation of 28 CFR 36.211.
- 12. All of the foregoing cited violations are violations of both the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines (ADAAG) and the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, as adopted by the Department of Justice.
- 13. The discriminatory violations described in paragraph 11 are not an exclusive list of the Defendant's ADA violations. Plaintiff requires the inspection of the Defendant's place of public accommodation in order to photograph and measure all of the discriminatory acts violating the ADA and all of the barriers to access. The individual Plaintiff, the members of the Plaintiff group, and all other individuals similarly-situated, have been denied access to, and have been denied the benefits of services, programs and activities of the Defendant's buildings and its facilities, and have otherwise been discriminated against and damaged by the Defendant because of the Defendant's ADA violations, as set forth above. The individual Plaintiff, the members of the Plaintiff group and all others similarly-situated will continue to suffer such discrimination, injury and damage without the immediate relief provided by the ADA as requested herein. In order to remedy this discriminatory situation, the Plaintiff requires an inspection of the Defendant's place of public accommodation in order to determine all of the areas of non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- 14. Defendant has discriminated against the individual and corporate Plaintiffs by denying them access to full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of its place of public accommodation or commercial facility in violation of 42 USC § 12181 et seq. and 28 CFR. 36.302 et seq. Furthermore, the Defendant continues to discriminate against the Plaintiff, and all those similarly-situated by failing to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such efforts that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services.
- 15. Plaintiff is without adequate remedy at law and is suffering irreparable harm. Considering the balance of hardships between the Plaintiff and Defendant, a remedy in equity is warranted. Furthermore, the public interest would not be disserved by a permanent injunction. Plaintiff has retained the undersigned counsel and is entitled to recover attorney's fees, costs and litigation expenses from the Defendant pursuant to 42 USC § 12205 and 28 CFR 36.505.
- Defendant is required to remove the existing architectural barriers to the physically disabled, when such removal is readily achievable for its place of public accommodation that has existed prior to January 26, 1992, 28 CFR 36.304(a); in the alternative, if there has been an alteration to Defendant's place of public accommodation since January 26, 1992, then the Defendant is required to ensure to the maximum extent feasible, that

the altered portions of the facility are readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs, 28 CFR 36.402; and finally, if the Defendant's facility is one which was designed and constructed for first occupancy subsequent to January 26, 1993, as defined in 28 CFR 36.401, then the Defendant's facility must be readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities as defined by the ADA.

- 17. Notice to Defendant is not required as a result of the Defendant's failure to cure the violations by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if Defendants have 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). All other conditions precedent have been met by Plaintiffs or waived by the Defendants.
- 18. Pursuant to 42 USC § 12188, this Court is provided with authority to grant Plaintiff Injunctive Relief, including an order to require the Defendant to alter the Tacony Creek Plaza to make those facilities readily accessible and useable to the Plaintiff and all other persons with disabilities as defined by the ADA; or by closing the facility until such time as the Defendant cures its violations of the ADA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully request:

- a. The Court issue a Declaratory Judgment that determines that the Defendant at the commencement of the subject lawsuit are in violation of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 USC § 12181 et seq.
- b. Injunctive relief against the Defendant including an order to make all readily achievable alterations to the facility; or to make such facility readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA; and to require

the Defendant to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such steps that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services.

- c. An award of attorney's fees, costs and litigation expenses pursuant to 42 USC § 12205.
- d. Such other relief as the Court deems just and proper, and/or is allowable under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Order shall further require the Defendant to maintain the required assessable features on an ongoing basis.

Date: May <u>20</u>, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

David S. Dessen, Esquire, (PA Bar No. 17627)

DESSEN, MOSES & ROSSITTO

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Email: jpf@fullerfuller.com

Counsel for Plaintiff

JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) Dessen, Moses & Rossitto, 600 Easton Road, Willow Grove, PA 19090; (215) 658-1400 II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only) III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box Only) III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plant and One Box for Plant and One Box for Plantiff (For Diversity Cases Only) IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only) IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only) V. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only) IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only) IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only) IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only) IV. Negotiable Instrument I 100 Insurance I 100 Insurance I 100 Insurance I 100 Marine I 101 Insurance I 101 Insurance I 101 Insurance I 102 Insurance I 103 Insurance I 104 Insurance I 105 Recovery of Overpayment I 106 Enforcement of Indignent I 107 Recovery of Overpayment I 108 Recovery of Overpayment I 108 Recovery of Overpayment I 108 Stackholeth Cases I 108 Stackholeth Cases I 108 Stackholeth Cases I 109 Miller Act I	I. (a) PLAINTIFFS THE INDEPENDED a New Jersey No	NCE PROJECT, INC., n Profit Corporation,			DEFENDANT	PARAM	OUNT PROPE	ERTIES 151 I	LEWIS,	LLC, a
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTION Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity): Title iii of the Americans with Disabilities Act - 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12181, et seq. Brief description of cause: Equal access to places of public accommodation for individuals with disabilities	VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	N Brief description of ca	use:	es Act -	42 U.S.C. Sec. 12	181, et sec	1			
CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION DEMAND S CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint: UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P. JURY DEMAND: Type Mand:	COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 23	IS A CLASS ACTION			CI	IECK YES only i		Without the	
VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY (See instructions): JUDGE DOCKET NUMBER	IF ANY	(See instructions):	10							
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: 1002 Central Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974-1030				
Address of Defendant:	2595 Interstate Drive, Suite 103, Harri	isburg, PA 17110		
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: 5696 Rising Sun Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19120				
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:				
Case Number:		Date Terminated:		
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is an		_		
previously terminated action in this court		Yes No 🗸		
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?				
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?				
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights Yes No Verification of the same individual?				
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above. DATE: 5 70 2020 Attorney-at-Law/Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)				
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)				
A. Federal Question Cases: 1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts 1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 2. FELA 2. Airplane Personal Injury 3. Assault, Defamation 4. Antitrust 4. Marine Personal Injury 5. Patent 5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury 6. Labor-Management Relations 6. Civil Rights 7. Civil Rights 7. Products Liability 8. Habeas Corpus 8. Products Liability 8. Produ				
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION (The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.) I, Davis S. Dessen , counsel of record or pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify: Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs: Relief other than monetary damages is sought.				
DATE: 5 (20/2020	Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff	17627		
NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if th	Switcher Self-Ontonian	Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)		

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

The Independence Pr	roject, Inc.	CMLACTION			
v.	: :				
Paramount Propert	ies 151 Lewis	NO.			
In accordance with the Civil Justice Expense and Delay Reduction Plan of this court, counsel for plaintiffshall complete a Case Management Track Designation Form in all civil cases at the time of filing the complaint and serve a copy on all defendants. (See§ 1:03 of the plan set forth on the reverse side of this form.) In the event that a defendant does not agree with the plaintiff regarding said designation, that defendant shall, with its first appearance, submit to the clerk of court and serve on the plaintiff and all other parties, a Case Management Track Designation Form specifying the track to which that defendant believes the case should be assigned.					
SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CASE MANAGEMENT TRACKS:					
(a) Habeas Corpus— Cases l	prought under 28 U.S.C.§	2241 through§ 2255.			
(b) Social Security— Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.					
c) Arbitration— Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2. ()					
d)Asbestos— Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.					
e) Special Management— Cases that do not fall into tracks (a) through (d) that are commonly referred to as complex and that need special or intense management by the court. (See reverse side of this form for a detailed explanation of special management cases.)					
O Standard Management - Cases that do not fall into account to					
5/20/2020 Pate 215-496-2902	Attorney-at-law 215-658-0747	Plaintiff Attorney for ddessen@dms-lawyer.com			
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(Civ. 660) 10/02